

The Mountbatten School



Poetry Anthology
2000

The 2000 Mountbatten School Poetry Festival

Writing on "The Subjects of Poetry" in 1924, T.E. Hulme said, "Subject doesn't matter...Is there any real zest in it?.... It doesn't matter if it were a lady's shoe or the starry heavens." What zest characterises all the entries to this year's festival! And what a variety of subjects! I would like to congratulate every writer who submitted a poem and I do hope that all of them will realise how proud they should be of their work.

Having worked as a judge on many of the national competitions, I should also like to congratulate Mountbatten on the quality of individual creativity which the school is nurturing. Too often batches of good poems come from schools, worthy poems, but somehow touched and deadened by the finger of a well-meaning teacher and smoothed to a collective 'sameness' of voice. Reading through the Mountbatten work I was delighted by the breadth of expression and voice I encountered, from the quiet grief of poems on the death of a loved grandparent, to the introspective musing of adolescence; from the racy excitement of sports lovers, to the lyrical contemplations on the natural world.

What swayed me to my final choices? Well, I have to confess that this was one of the hardest competitions I have ever had to judge.

The poet Czeslaw Milosz describes his own thinking about the necessary qualities of poetry in his own poem "Preface". It begins,

"First, plain speech in the mother tongue..."

That natural, unforced, clarity and simplicity matters to my way of thinking almost as much as originality of idea and image. The ability to say as much as needs to be said and no more is a mark of true depth and sophistication in a poet.

And why does poetry matter? Milosz concludes the same poem with these words,

"Novels and essays serve but will not last,
One clear stanza can take more weight
Than a whole wagon of elaborate prose."

My final choice was of poems that could take the whole weight of their subject matter, but I suppose I should confess that my decisions were probably based on envy. These were the poems that I wish I had written!

Best wishes to you all

Janni Howker
Cumbria 2000

Those Great Tourers

Oh, how I love those great tourers,
zooming, flaming, around the track,
the way they look so slick and cool,
zoom off and then come back.

Thinking how the drivers cope,
they must be made of steel,
nearly ninety degrees inside the cab,
gripping the steering wheel.

Oh, how I love those great tourers,
the pit lane is always manic,
whenever cars come in for fuel and tyres,
it sends everyone in a panic!

My dad and I, in every weather
we travel to touring cars.
They flash round the track so fast,
I think they could travel to Mars!

War Veterans

Around the pillar a slave walked
remembering his days of freedom.
Beyond the pillar was the old battleground where he had
attacked the Roman Shields.

Through the arrows rode the French Knight,
though he knew he would eventually be struck down.
When he got past the archers he was battered and wounded
and he rode straight into his doom.

Over the stream rode the royalist cavalry,
straight towards the roundheads
musket fire was all around them until they all fell down
at death's feet.

Next to the dead knelt the British soldier
firing and loading his musket as fast as he could.
Though he was only firing to stop
those who were firing at him.

Behind their trench walls stood the British gunner,
coughing and spluttering because of the poisonous gas.
He had no idea why he was fighting this war
though he still kept firing the field gun.

Near Berlin wept an ex German soldier
remember the World War Two
he was ashamed that his country had been so bad
and wept for his friends and family who had perished with the war.

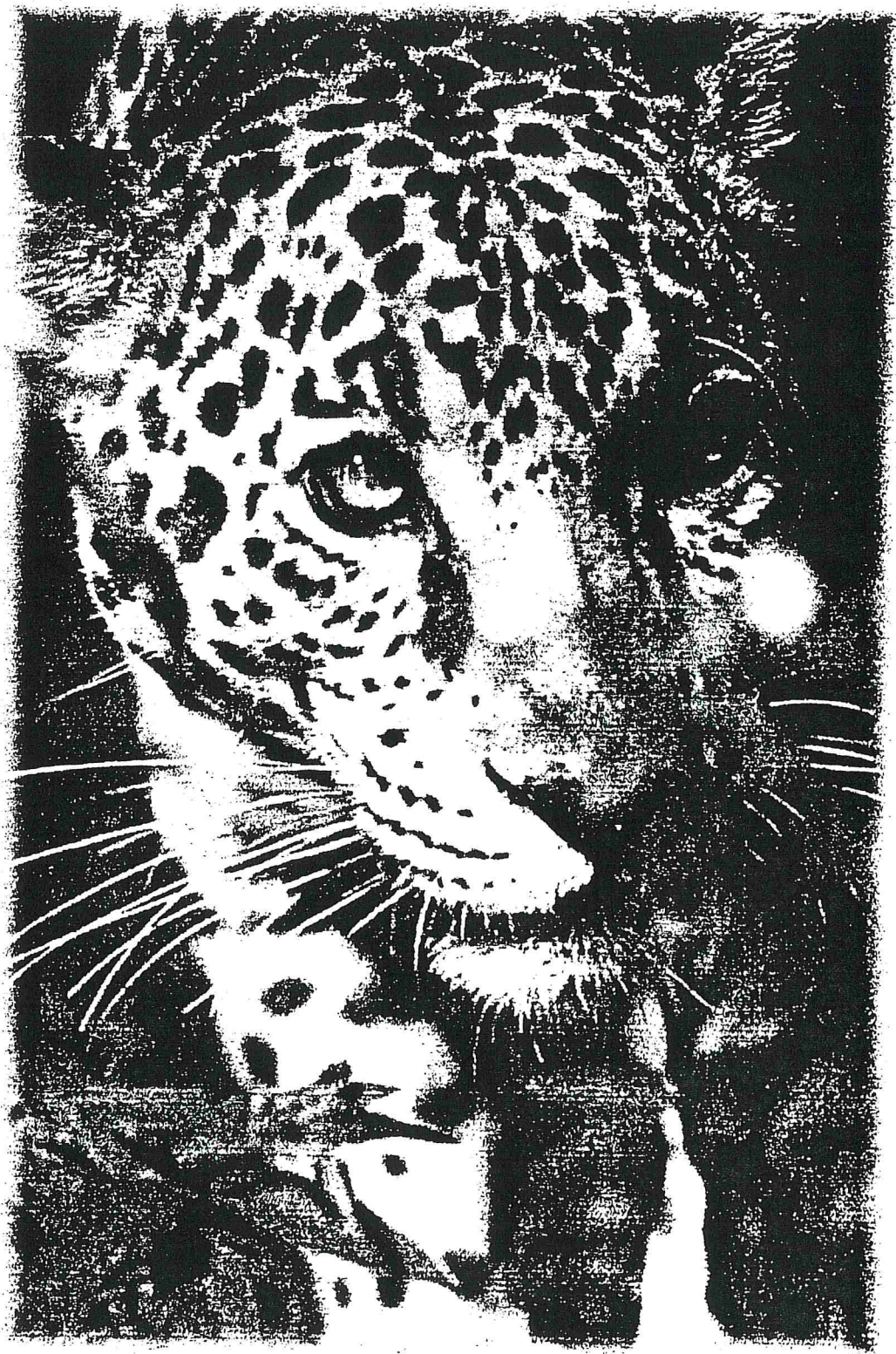
Under the jungle tree tops ran the American soldier.
Trying to escape from the Vietcong,
he had no idea of what had become of his friends
but still he kept on running.

Beyond the refugee camp strode the refugee,
thinking of what had become of his homeland Kosovo.
He hoped that his homeland would be freed from
the Serbians and Milosovich.

The Kingdom of Animals

The Cheetah

*A sprinter,
A runner,
A fast and powerful hunter,
A watcher,
A learner,
A wise and steady predator,
A skilful,
A masterful,
A quick and steady fireball,
A racer,
A speeder,
A king of the land: a cheetah.*



Emily Foley
7IHG

House - Garden - Stone - Bench

Inside my house lives my family,
Throughout my house is their love,
Beside my house is a big oak tree,
And behind my house is my garden.

Beyond my garden is a stone,
Under the stone lives a centipede,
Next to the stone is a leaf,
Near the leaf is a bench.

All around the bench
Are these wonderful,
And natural things.

Commended

David Driver
7MTR

My Tiger-Fire Poem

With a flicker of a spark the match was
alight,
The boy threw it down in the dead of night.
The forest was on fire; tiny flames licked
the ground.
Quietly at first with a gentle purring sound.
As the flames prowled about gaining size
and strength.
They grew and grew to an extraordinary
length.
Red and yellow stripes pranced to the sky,
Ashes and smoke went fluttering by.
Grass and trees were gnashed up by the
fang like flames,
Could this treacherous fireball ever be
tamed?
The fire leapt up with a spine-chilling roar,
It shredded down the forest with its
vicious claws.

Commended

Stephen Reader
7NWT

Feelings

Happiness is yellow,
It looks like a bright sun in the summer,
Happiness is the sound of laughter when a joke is
told,
It smells like chocolates,
Happiness tastes like freshly baked bread,
It feels like something soft and cuddly.

Fear is black,
It looks like someone shivering in the cold,
Fear is the sound of wolves howling,
It smells like acrid smoke,
Fear tastes like brussel sprouts,
It feels like goosebumps.

Sadness is blue,
It looks like tears running down a face,
Sadness is the wail of someone crying,
It smells of salty water,
Sadness is the taste of cold, leftover food,
It feels like being alone.

Commended

**Ryan Ellis
7PGR TAS**

Our Friend, Joey

Joey is a shetland sheepdog.
He isn't really mine.
I share him with my grandad
who cares for him most of the time.

When grandad goes on holiday.
I have him to myself
I feed him, walk him, brush him.
To keep him in good health.

What makes him extra special
He was born when I was one.
Then why is he getting really old
While I'm still very young?

Commended

Tom Fleming
7TAS

BELOW

Clear bright warm water reaches into distant
darkness,
Smoky blue lobsters peer from coral crevices,
Anenomes endlessly wave
Goggle-eyed fish patrol,
Shimmering shoals of tiny fish part like curtains
As a shadowy shark sweeps by,
Nervous crabs disturb the smooth sea bed,
Anonymous eyes blink in the yellowy-orange sand,
Life below recedes into a blur
As the burning sun comes into focus.

Tom Donaldson
7SMW

THE NIGHT TIME VISITOR

He clattered the saucer
Upside down
After scrambling out of winter
Searching for slugs
Or worm and grubs
Such a noisy eater.

Foraging amongst
The oak tree roots
And knotty wooden spines
His little heart did flutter
Fast and excited as he sniffed
Aromatic garden clutter.

At night underneath
The cool bright moon
Sensing danger approaching
His wistful thoughts and instinct rife
With his little body curled
His spiky back protecting.

Commended

**Alice Gradidge
7TAS**

Stranded!

On an island far away,
where the sea laps on the sand,
The palm trees whisper silent secrets,
In the stillness of the tropical night,
Stars gleam down the calming ocean,
And turn it creamy turquoise blue.

On an island far away,
Serenity rules the earth,
Sweet bird songs arise from the clear rock pools,
The music of Mother Nature's creatures.
The plants and flowers dance to the soft sounds,
Perfect peace is all around.

Commended

Sarah Gale
7LCA

FOOTSTEPS OF THE NIGHT

Softly, softly, stealthily,
Twisting through the trees;
Fur is gently ruffled,
By the midnight breeze.

Pawprints of a stranger,
Stepped into the ground;
Eyes of burning fire,
Whispers make no sound.

The leaves of Autumn withered,
Condemned without a fight;
The footsteps of a tiger,
The footsteps of the night.

Commended

Robert Fresson
7NWT

Babla-Sama Tree

Sun shines down on the sandy shores,
Waves whirl, washing the seaweed,
Crunchy coco-nuts crash to the ground,
As the polichromeic Parrot sings his song,
The lizard lies listening, and looks at the leaves,
Looks at the leaves of the Babla-Sama tree.
All the turtles trundle up to this tree,
And it catches the sun in a beautiful way,
Then the birds bundle to its branches
Because as evening comes, Babla-Sama goes to sleep!



The Angel

The golden waves wash gently down her spine,
The curved islands of her ears jut, reaching skyward,
The light foamed tails curve gently over themselves,
And crash down on the satin pink beach of her neck.

The ruby snakes gently kiss,
Wrapped around the soda white stone tablets,
Wriggling over the peach soft plains of her face,
Towards the perfectly turned down ledge of her chin.

The all knowing, heavenly mind inside a perfect case,
That rings out the song of cherubs and angels harps,
The movements of her body have the grace of a swan,
I wish only to be embraced in the wings of this earthbound
angel.



by Robin Black ⚡ ACN

David Phillips
8APL

Red Sky Night

Walking home from angry teachers with big hot cheeks,
Passing tomato plants on the way,
Blood red sun setting in the sky,
Knowing tomorrow's another day.
But tomorrow is school again,
I'll just write a sorry note,
After sweating through the night,
with a bad sore throat.

Lara Lanaghan
8APL

It's Not That Bad To Be Old!

My grandpa has white hair
And is almost going bald.
Sometimes when I don't
He really feels the cold.

It takes him half an hour
To walk down the busy street,
But he doesn't always recognise
The people that he meets.

He wears these thick old glasses
Which make his eyes look funny,
In the winter when it's cold
His nose is always runny.

He always told us stories
While we were both in bed,
It's not that bad being old
When the alternative is dead.

Hannah Tree
8PFR

Madness

I saw a tree well up with tears,
I saw an eye left for years,
I saw an apple breakdown and cry,
I saw a mother begin to lie,
I saw boy blossom in spring,
I saw a daisy start to sing,
I saw a bird flicker in the wind,
I saw a candle shed its skin,
I saw a snake glint in the sun,
I saw a diamond start to run,
I saw a fox bare for years,
I saw a tree well up with tears.

Commended

Naheed Brora
8CED

Pakistan

I'm standing here just moments away
Moments away from meeting my loved ones.
They're wearing some Salwar Kameez
with fabrics as soft as skin.
There are fragrances in the air
that are sharp spices
and Indian foods cover the table.
Relatives speak to me in a language I can relate to.
Now I'm in a market so colourful yet strange.
People rush about
buying fruits, spices and vegetables
The atmosphere is so cheerful.

Commended

Arran Wiltshire
8HWT

You're born, You live, You die

You're born, great fuss
Hustle, bustle, People
Or headless chickens?

You live, great bore
Get Lucky? great time
You win, you lose.

You die, great fuss
again,
Big deal, dressed in BLACK
Cry, cry, Get over it!

Commended

Anna-Marie Smith
8SKY

Moving Market

Pots, pans and silvery jars
Ornaments from countries afar
Clean, white cups that shine like the moon
They will appear very soon
When the moving market comes.

Fruit he sells pound by the pound
On his market that comes around.
Colourful plates, dark brown dates
He puts his life at stake
In honour of the moving market.

Down where the winding river flows,
Or where the moon like lilies grow
To foreign countries no one knows.
Only his tracks show where he goes
The moving market vanishes.

Commended

Joe Tancock
8SKY

The Wishing Well

Leaning over the wall of the well,
looking down into the tar black water,
My reflection I can see,
With fluffy white clouds behind me.

But then I look closer and see what's really
inside,
The dreams and wishes that people hide.
The copper coins which lie on the bottom.
Some wishes come true.....

But some, just forgotten!

Emila Wadsworth
9MST

Grandad's Roses

When it was still just a secret,
still a whisper
I saw it in my mother's eyes and I could tell
It was the nightmare I had not yet dreamed
the reality I had not yet seen.
The pain scorched my young innocent heart
such pain I had never felt before
I had opened Pandora's box
I had seen through hell's doors.
How I loved her and
how I still do!
I don't remember much
I was so young
just little things
sitting there, rocking in her rocking chair.
The stories she used to tell made me laugh and smile
Grandad's Roses next to the door.
Apart from the roses
It was a naked garden.
The biscuit tin,
the wall I climbed along, over and over again.
But she always had sad eyes
she didn't often smile
she missed him so much
she loved his gentle touch
But she suffered
so many years without him
what hurts me most is the look in mum's eyes
as she tries not to cry.
I didn't see her much
she lived so far away
Now I wish I'd made the most of
when she came to stay.

Laura Hensser
9 MST

Silence

The loudest thing you can do during silence is to break it,
The silent whisper only echoes once and the words are sprung
From the mouth and from the sneezes that say "Sorry".
And the reply disturbing "shhhhhhh".

The hand to the mouth, the lips pouted,
The clenched teeth with a whisper a fly could hear,
During silence!

How many times the Librarian says with an undertone murmur,
Listen and be SILENT!

A patient stillness, a flickering page,
With a continuous rhythm of silence.
The loudest thing you can do during silence is to break it!

3rd

Michael Knight
9RME

Old PC

There's an old PC
Decaying in the corner,
Twenty years old,
Slow as a tortoise.

The PC was dusty,
It looked mouldy white,
Tiny dull screen,
What a horrific sight.

I switched it on,
It growled like a tiger
And suddenly froze up
Like Africans in Russia.

I tried restarting
But all was quiet,
Then it blew up the table
And sucked me inside it.

Commendation

What is the Colour Red?

Lita Morgan
9MST

Roses what sweet delight
Like hearts fire burning bright
Sleek racing raging through the track.

Poppies blooming out of everywhere
Anger rises as the fight proceeds.
Like blood going everywhere painted on a wall.

Valentine valentine your kiss is so
sweet.

volcano blowing lava everywhere
everywhere.

Like a candle burning in the night

Charlene Sibbons
10CLE

PART OF YOU (for my mother)

I found you in a box,
A sealed box under the stairs.
I dragged it out not knowing
What delicate things it contained.

I held you in my hand
Astonished
You had lived the dream
Of every little girl.

I never knew.

I saw a different beauty
So graceful and free.
Sparkling sequins and ribbon,
A tight bun, tiara and tights.

There you were balancing on the end
Of your pink satin shoes.
Such shape.
You were a swan, a dancing breeze.


I see you slowly working.
Why didn't you tell me?
I feel guilty
Did I stop you?

I am only seeing half a woman.
You have kept part of your life from me
But I am not angry
Those times belong to you.

Fiona MacFadyn
10DAN

The Doodle

People do it when they are bored
People do it for fun
Some people do it for a living
Some people just do it as a scribble.

People have their very own ideas of it:
Circles, scribbles, squiggly things, lines and dots,
it can be anything you want it to be,
even one of my Dad's Nesies: 

Can you have such a thing as a literary doodle?
Shapeless, rhymeless, pointless, nonsensical
But somehow interestingly useless
Is this a poetic doodle?

Natalie Cataldo
10DAN

Where Am I Going

I'm walking,
I know I'll get there someday,
'Just keep your head up!'

Meanwhile I still walk,
I don't see the end.
The stress is building,
'Don't be stupid, you don't know what you 're saying.'

I'm picking up my pace,
Remember manage your time.
You've got to learn to be independent,
Clean up after yourself,
I am not nagging.

I'm almost jogging now,
Please don't argue.
Do your work,
It's late. Stop working. Go to bed
Don't shout at me, it won't get you anywhere,
You really need to calm down.

I'm running.
You don't appreciate anything,
Why are you so selfish?
I never had what you have,
You can go out if you like, you deserve it,
But you can't go until you've tidied up.
Honestly, you're a disaster.

I'm out of breath, I'm stopping,
I don't see the end,
I give up, I do try my best, but I never win,
I need a break, I'll get there eventually.

Hollie Wells
10 SHN

The Insomniac

At ten o'clock she's tucked up tight
under the duvet, turned out the light,
she lies, with both eyes open wide
Head on pillow, yet inside
a million thoughts are racing around
while sleepless eyes begin to pound.
Midnight strikes, she twists and turns,
Hot and sticky - how she yearns
for that elusive wink of sleep
And ... aren't these pillows soft and deep?
Yet still she lies, as ever awake
And waiting for the day to break.
It's two am, she's in a ball,
pressed up tight against the wall
Legs akimbo, sheet on floor
And more awake than ever before
At four o'clock she still can't sleep
She's watching dawn's grey fingers creep
and infiltrate the still, black night
And how she wishes that she might
Just take a kip or steal a nap
But now it's six, no chance of that.
She hauls herself out of her bed
with shaking limbs and throbbing head.
But is it night or is it day?
Who can tell? who can say?

Commendation

Sam McMahon
10DAN

The Ski Trip

For months it seemed ages away,
Then all the planning was forgotten
As I sat on the back seat of the coach.

When we finally reached Italy
I caught the first sight of snow.
The slopes were immaculate -
Fit for heaven
The snow seemed painted everywhere.
A stream of skiers flowed past us
Like me tomorrow - King of the Slopes

At the first glimpse of snow
I was raring to go
Like a greyhound in the stalls.
I was a mere fledging
But I flew!

Wind in my hair,
Tears in my eyes,
And the sweet mountain air.
Seven days of bliss.

Then it came -
The last day in harmony.
I was leaving a part of me behind;
My love at first sight.

Commendation

Jenny Careil
10 GJN

To be Popular

I would do anything to be popular,
To be with them over there,
"The Cool Gang" - with their hair
Pulled back, and their perfect smiles,
They can get away with anything, them.
What I would give to laugh and to joke,
And for them to notice me,

But that's the thing..

They do notice,
For them *I* am their laugh and joke,
For them *I* am their amusement,
To be picked on and used,
That's what I'm there for,
Whatever they want me to do,
And *I* said, "I would do anything to be popular"?!?!

I have changed me mind - No Way

Ben Campion
10SHN

Commendation

Baiting a Man

Upon the ravaged cliff top.
The too old and the too young.
We watch our sons and brothers.
Our fathers and our loved ones.
They sail way on swift salt breeze,
Fighting for anothers cause.
Honour. The bait that hooked them.
Pride. The word that kept them there.
Soon to die on distant shore
Dead.
Fighting someone else's war.

Commendation

Holly Black
10GJN

Like This

I want to stay like this
If possible to the end.
By now the world around
No longer interests me.
It is enough that you are here
And that I hold you like this.

A gesture from you is enough,
A smile,
A word;
And a moment like this
Is worth an eternity.
Light a fire and then
Let's be alone!
Us.

The Rainforest

*The Rainforest throbs with life. A
deciduous woodland that radiates
across the world.*

*You can taste the hot, moist atmosphere.
Lianas twine around the jagged tree trunks.
A blood eared parakeet feeds
On guava fruit high up in the canopy.
Taps as two black beetles dance on a spiny log
As if performing in a show.*

*A waterfall tumbles onto the hard earth
Capybara drink at the water's edge.
The water a transparent substance
warmed by the beaming sun.*

*The oxygen is fresh and clean
But suffocated by the surrounding greenery.
Golden lion tamarins
Chatter and squabble incessantly.*

*There are mystical chambers with dark dimensions
That are hiding a secret untouched by man,
Known only by the forest's spirit.*

*The canopy is like a thick blanket
It tucks the forest away from sight.*

Out of sight, out of mind.

Faern Pepper
10 GJN

Evolution's Clock

Make haste, do not tarry
or you'll be left behind

Evolution's clock is turning
Never to rewind

Make haste before disaster strikes
And time is a thing of the past

Go on with your daily lives
BUT MAKE EVERY SECOND LAST

1st

Juliet Nobbs
11DSR

He stood there in the shadows
Behind the cold metal bar
He watched her
He envied her

His face an expression of jealousy
Her face one of happiness
He couldn't do it
But he wanted to

Slowly he moved a hand towards her
And looked her straight in the eyes
(She's going to notice
She's got to have seen me)

He grabbed it fast, her
Realisation slow, the disbelief showed on her face
He had to do it fast
The cream was melting
The ice cream was his

Mark McKay

11 SHL

Tyto Alba

Golden-orange
Reflects in deep waters
A silent shadow,
Drifts slowly across open territory.
Heart shaped face looking downwards
Her ghostly cry soils on the breeze.
A faint rustle
Inaudible to our ears
Alerts her telescopic vision
she dives heart first
And swoops
Opening vice-like talons
Prey stunned, claws clutch round fresh flesh
Grasping her trophy she takes to air.
Silence.

Abby Leaver
11SHL

The destroying Angel

A destroying angel
 small and hidden
In secret form
 Floating spores of poison
Carried by
 the
 wind.

Nestling with the trees
 Tiny umbrella of danger
Preferring the damp
 And dark corners
of this wood.

She doesn't stalk her prey
 Draws no blood
Leaves no tracks,
Silently waiting
 To be mistaken
For a kindly Saint.

Each victim lovingly
 picks and
prepares
 Never suspecting the
 Tasty morsal to be
a destroying angel

Ann Higgins
11 SCS

You

If God thought
you
were so special
that
he made you
different
from everyone else
then
surely He meant
for
you to be
yourself.

To be Kept WELL Away from the English Faculty

Antonia Russell-Clark

11DSR

"Place the paper face upwards on the desk"
Said the teacher with a sadistic smile.
"Poise your pencils above the first stanza
And prepare to take notes.

I am a poem
and with a broken heart
overly dissected
one too many English lessons under my
pencil in the eye
To understand me
a pair of froth corrupted lungs
it only takes a glance.
The bearded sailor waved his walking stick in the air and
shouted:
"Go any further into that poem and you'll
never return."
but you have to learn
and a loosened kidney bobbed by
Oh! Get out of it. A poem has its pride.
Watch out
for the flying
thesaurus rex!
Where's the meaning?
under my sleeve
so don't make the incision!

HEAD OF THE "PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO POEMS SOCIETY"

Cat Napping

Ian Forward
11SCS

I lie at the top of the stairs, my belly
exposed.

Insolent, no falsifying dream
Between my sharp teeth and clawed feet:
Or in sleep rehearse eat after sleep after eat.

The convenience of the high stairs
The humans' loyalty and cat tray
Are of advantage to me;
And the food smelly for my detection.

My claws are locked upon the soft carpet.
It took a whole two minutes
To reproduce my paw, my each tooth;
Now I hold Arthur's in my paw

And stand up and sit down again slowly-
I sleep where I please making good use of my time
There is such apathy in my body:
My purpose is resting on beds-

The pleasure of bed!
For the one path of my life is direct
Through my slaves' giving.
No food escapes my sight:

My burn is beside me.
My hunger has not changed since I began.
My closed eye has allowed no pains.
I am going to sleep on like this.

After reading "Hawk Roosting" by Ted Hughes.

The Winter One

(After reading "Work and Play" by Ted Hughes)

The Robin of Winter, he works all the winter,
A buffeted breast of coveted crimson,
A beautiful body of breathtaking beige.
But the toasty hot homes
Are protected from frost
The owners forgetting
Their Arctic surrounding.

The Robin of Winter, he wages through winter,
Wisps up the white
To be nested and wait there.
But the wall of a window protects from the truth
An icy glazed barrier
That blocks out the cold.

The tawdry world,
Of sherry and presents
Comes once a year
And descends as it pleases.
The Robin of Winter, a bountiful soul,
Nested at night but out in the daytime,
A pattern of paths he leaves as his trail,
The trail of the Winter One.

Simon Hammond 11 MED

DRINKER

Amy Booth
11PRM

The man starts stirring - a shame
To think of. All night
Booze filled his open entrails. Now a piercing headache,
A line of drool, stubbed chin,
He falls out of bed.
A confused state of numbness he stands
In position to hose the dank wall of the lavatory.

He defies caffeine and won't start.
Breath is like poison already
Wanting to suck smoke, and eyes staring blankly.
As if hiding nothing, but jumbled matter.
I think of it in pity. Beyond him.
The kettle wails - capitulates miserably
In the lonely, cold kitchen. Ringing,
The telephone aggravates the man as he pours one
More, and heads for the stairs northward.
All the time the man is drowning.
In the units of 'needed' drink.
The pleasure is now gone.

Homage to "Tractor" by Ted Hughes

Hawk Eyes

Katie Munns

11 MED

I sit at the front of the class, my eyes open
Darting fiercely, no movement at all
Between the classroom door and classroom back
Or any kind of sound or laughter.

The silence of a timed exam!
The calmness and tranquility
Are of advantage to me
As I wait for the essays to be turned in for my inspection.

My feet are tapping impatiently.
It took the whole half term
To prepare for this test, my each question:
And now I hold the culmination in my hand

Or get up, and write on the board slowly -
I put red pen where I like because it is all mine,
There is no sympathy in my marking:
My manners are giving out Fs -

The allotment of detention.
For the one path of my anger is direct
Through the free time of teenagers.
No arguments assert my might:

The National Curriculum is behind me.
Nothing has changed since I began.
My eye has permitted no talking.
I am going to keep things like this.

After reading "Hawk Roosting" by Ted Hughes.

